

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 COA-02 IO-14 DLOS-07 EB-11 COME-00 DRC-01

/137 W

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R 020931Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3549

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, ENRG, BG, IN

SUBJ: INDIAN AND BANGLADESH OFFSHORE WATERS

REF: A. DELHI A-223, 6/8/74 B. DACCA 2342

BEGIN SUMMARY: MEDIAN LINE SUGGESTED IN NEW DELINEATION OF INDIAN OFFSHORE AREA ADJACENT TO BANGLADESH WATERS (REF A) WOULD APPEAR, IF EXTENDED, TO CUT INTO BANGLADESH OFFSHORE AREA. BANGLADESH BASELINE POINT, PREVIOUSLY REPORTED AS IN INDIAN OFFSHORE AREA, CONFIRMED AS BEING REGARDED AS IN WATERS CLAIMED BY BD. US COMPANIES AWARDED AREAS ON EITHER SIDE OF MEDIAN LINE. PRECISE OUTLINE OF BD OFFSHORE AREA IS BEING OBTAINED, FOLLOWING WHICH EMBASSY MAY PROPOSE MOVING TWO GOVERNMENTS TO DISCUSS MEDIAN LINE AND TO DEFINE THEIR RESPECTIVE OFFSHORE WATERS SO US COMPANIES CONCERNED MAY PROCEED WITH OIL EXPLORATION WITHOUT ATTRACTING PROTEST FROM OTHER SIDE. END SUMMARY.

1. APPRECIATE AUTHORITATIVE EXPOSITION GIVEN IN REF A OF INDIAN
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AND BANGLADESH WATERS AS DEFINED FOR PURPOSES OFFSHORE OIL EX-

PLORATION RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES. ACCOMPANYING MAP PARTICULARLY HELPFUL. DELINEATION OF NEW INDIAN OFFSHORE AREA VII, ASSIGNED TO CARLSBERG PETROLEUM, HOWEVER, WOULD SEEM TO POSE FURTHER POSSIBLE PROBLEM. LINE BETWEEN POINTS SX AND FIVE OF THIS AREA APPEARS TO BE PARALLEL TO OR COINCIDENT WITH OFFSHORE MEDIAN LINE DIVIDING INDIAN FROM BANGLADESH WATERS. MEDIAN LINE REPRODUCED FROM NAUTICAL MAP PROVIDED BY STATE DEPARTMENT (STATE A(6227, 6/15/73), BUT WITH THE PARALLELISM/COINCIDENCE CITED ABOVE PRESUMABLY REPRESENTS WHAT GOI REGARDS TO BE LEGAL OFFSHORE MEDIAN LINE. LINE, IF CONTINUED, CUTS PROGRESSIVELY MORE DEEPLY INTO BANGLADESH WATERS AS IT PROCEEDS IN SSE DIRECTION.

2. HEDAYAT AHMED, SECRETARY, MINISTRY NATURAL RESOURCES, HAS CONFIRMED THAT IN ALLOCATING OYISTMRE AREAS, BDG HAS BEEN USING LINE STRAIGHT TO SOUTH SHOWN ON EMBASSY Dacca MAP (AND ALSO EMBASSY DELHI MAP). FURTHERMORE, OFFSHORE REGION AWARDED ASHLAND OIL BY BDG ABUTS THE BANGLADESH LINE AND INCLUDES AREAS INTO WHICH THE INDIAN LINE EXTENDS.

3. HOW LEGAL MEDIAN LINE ACTUALLY SHOULD BE DISPOSED REMAINS UP TO BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN GOI AND BDG. WE FEEL LATTER WILL ARGUE FOR A LINE SWUNG MORE TOWARD DUE SOUTH THAN INDIAN LINE Delineated ON EMBASSY DELHI MAP. BDG OFFICIALS WERE EARLIER SHOWN OUR WORKING MAP AND THE DOTTED LINE THEREON GIVING MEDIAN LINE AS WE WERE ABLE TO TRANSPOSE IT FROM ANOTHER STATE DEPARTMENT MAP; THEY EXPRESSED DISMAY OVER THAT LINE EVEN THOUGH IT WAS MORE TOWARD NORTH/SOUTH AXIS THAN LINE DEFINED IN EMBASSY DELHI MAP. BDG WOULD BE MORE DISMAYED IF SHOWN LATTER. BDG OFFICIALS HOLD THAT CURVATURE OF THEIR SHORELINE UNFAIRLY PENALIZES BD WHEN MEDIAN LINE DRAWN ON BASIS OF EQUIDISTANT PRINCIPLE.

4. AHMED FURTHERMORE CONFIRMED THAT BANGLADESH BASELINE POINT NO. 1 IS REGARDED AS WITHIN BANGLADESH WATERS. AS REPORTED IN REF B, IT LIES CLEARLY IN INDIAN OFFSHORE AREA AWARDED CARLSBERG. CO IS TO WEST OF TWO AFOREMENTIONED HYPOTHETICAL MEDIAN LINES AND MAY ANTICIPATE A CLAIM BY BANGLADESH TO A THIRD MEDIAN LINE PASSING THROUGH THAT POINT IN NORTH/SOUTH DIRECTION WHICH WOULD SLICE OFF A GOOD BIT OF CARLSBERG'S AREA VII.

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5. AHMED HAS UNDERTAKEN TO PLOT ASHLAND OFFSHORE AREA ON EMBASSY Dacca MAP. WHEN RESULTS KNOWN, WE SHALL REPORT.

6. IN INTERIM WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHETHER DISPOSITION OF INDIAN OFFSHORE AREA VII IS PUBLIC INFORMATION AND CAN BE PASSED ON TO BDG. HEDAYAT AHMED HAS EXPRESSED INTEREST IN DOING AN OVERLAY ON BDG MAP SHOWING ANGLE OF INDIAN MEDIAN LINE. PLEASE ADVISE.

7. SITUATION APPARENTLY HAS ARISEN WHEREIN CARLSBERG HAS BEEN GRANTED BY GOI AN OFFSHORE AREA WHICH IF FULLY EXPLORED MAY PLACE IT INTO BANGLADESH WATERS, AND AHS LAND IS BEING GRANTED BY BDG AN OFFSHORE AREA WHICH IF FULLY EXPLORED WOULD BRING IT INTO WATERS WHICH MAY BE CLAIMED BY INDIA. CLEARLY TIME HAS COME FOR TWO COUNTRIES TO DISCUSS DIVIDING LINE SERIOUSLY WITH A VIEW INTER ALIA TOWARD INSURING THAT OIL EXPLORATION EFFORTS CAN PROCEED WITHOUT ENGENDERING BILATERAL DISPUTES. SINCE AMERICAN COMPANIES INVOLVED ON BOTH SIDES OF LINE, USG WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE INTEREST IN MOVING TWO GOVERNMENTS TOWARD EARLY CONSIDERATION MEDIAN LINE ISSUE. WHEN PRECISE OUTLINE ASHLAND AREA PROVIDED, EMBASSY WILL MAKE RECOMMENDATION VBR APPROPRIATE ACTION.

8. LONDON REQUESTED TO CONTACT BLAKE OF ASHLAND OIL AND SUGGEST WHEN ASHLAND REPS NEXT IN BANGLADESH, THEY CONTACT EMBASSY.
BOSTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TERRITORIAL WATERS, BOUNDARY CLAIMS, OFFSHORE OIL FIELDS, EXPLORATORY DRILLING, BUSINESS FIRMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974DACCA02988
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740176-0302
From: DACCA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740782/aaaacryi.tel
Line Count: 132
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A. DELHI A-223, 6/8/74 B. DACCA 2342
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 JUL 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19-Jul-2001 by kellerpr>; APPROVED <20 FEB 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDIAN AND BANGLADESH OFFSHORE WATERS
TAGS: PBOR, ENRG, BG, IN, US
To: NEW DELHI LONDON
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005